



Proust's New Eyes  
(500 lines of words)  
Tom Corrado



*again, for you . . .*

*The only true voyage of discovery  
is in seeing with new eyes.*  
- Marcel Proust

1     Albertine Simonet is Marcel's mistress ...  
2     Marcel is the narrator of Marcel Proust's  
3     seven-volume *À la recherche du temps perdu* ...  
4     *In Search of Lost Time* ...  
5     Marcel *is* Proust ...  
6     Marcel is obsessed with Albertine ...  
7     He wishes to possess her ... to own her ...  
8     Albertine appears in three of the seven volumes ...  
9     Her name occurs 2,363 times ... on 807 pages ...  
10    Albertine is first seen pushing her bicycle  
11    on a beach ... skirts billowing ...  
12    Marcel will return again and again to this image ...  
13    Albertine is asleep in 19 percent of the novel ...  
14    Asleep, she becomes a plant ...  
15    her hair like crinkly black violets ...  
16    Proust uses plants as metaphors  
17    for female sexual desire ...  
18    In *The Albertine Workout* the poet Anne Carson  
19    notes that plants expose their genitalia ...  
20    Marcel observes that sometimes in her sleep  
21    Albertine throws off her kimono and lies naked ...  
22    Hence, Proust's fascination with sleep ...  
23    Fade to black ...  
24  
25    An afternoon crash course in Classics  
26    changes the way you approach texts  
27    while gravel trails bloat big cats on fat bikes  
28    waiting to find out what it all means  
29    beginning with *Shall we begin?*  
30    as we begin Frances O'Connor's *Emily*  
31    with more *isms* to latch onto  
32    sprung from the sibs' paracosms  
33    to embellish the autofictions

34 of those in the boarded-up storefronts of no-no  
35 disputing the biopic tag  
36 with sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll  
37 and a downplay of collaboration  
38 ignoring Emily's *diary paper*...  
39 And behind the embellishments,  
40 How did she write it?...  
41 How this from a strange recluse  
42 in a backwater on the moors?...  
43 How did she write it?...  
44 Fade to black ...

45

46 *In Search of Lost Time* is Proust's life  
47 told as an allegorical search for truth ...  
48 It is informed by Proust's notion  
49 that the artist's task is to excavate memories  
50 trapped in the unconscious ...

51 Its main theme is involuntary memory  
52 in which a cue triggers a recollection ...

53 This has come to be called *Proust's madelaine* ...

54 In January 1909, a cup of tea and a biscuit  
55 revive Proust's childhood memory ...

56 *An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, but*  
57 *individual, detached, with no suggestion of its*  
58 *origin. And at once the vicissitudes of life had*  
59 *become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its*  
60 *brevity illusory - this new sensation having had on*  
61 *me the effect which love has of filling me with a*  
62 *precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me,*  
63 *it was myself. I had ceased now to feel mediocre,*  
64 *accidental, mortal...*

65 Fade to black ...

66

67 You take notes on the straight and narrow  
68 as the detritus of a life  
69 crashes the weight of a wake ...  
70 Act One Scene One:  
71 You search for younger days:  
72 riding a balloon-tire bicycle through the streets  
73 and into fields of dreams  
74 appropriating clichés with reckless abandon ...  
75 Each day up and out and into the fray  
76 following the yellow brick road  
77 into ... and beyond ... the Great Beyond ...  
78 You balk at the thought of yet another move  
79 to quell restlessness while off-script  
80 odysseyites bleed the shoot in a New York minute  
81 tooling along coastal roads on café racers  
82 bells whistles lace-up leathers ...  
83 Fade to black ...  
84  
85 Marcel is suddenly taken back to his childhood  
86 where his aunt Léonie would offer him lime-flower  
87 tea together with madeleines ... *The whole of*  
88 *Combray and of its surroundings, taking their proper*  
89 *shapes and growing solid, sprang into being, town*  
90 *and gardens alike ... together with the*  
91 *unremembered state which brought with it no logical*  
92 *proof of its existence, but only the sense that it was*  
93 *a happy, that it was a real state in whose presence*  
94 *other states of consciousness melted and vanished.*  
95 Fade to black ...  
96  
97 Alone now in the wilderness  
98 in a blizzard ...  
99 Act Two, much the same

100     prompting your comment on the formulaic ...  
101     That it works is incredulous ...  
102     Are you sure you want to proceed? ...  
103     If you do, you'll have to walk us through  
104     the proof specifying falsehoods within  
105     a narrow margin of error ...  
106     Think an endangered Snow Leopard  
107     in one of the most remote areas on earth ...  
108     You are with yourself  
109     you are within yourself  
110     not unlike the unnamed monster  
111     in Mary Shelley's novel  
112     with Victor Frankenstein near death  
113     on an ice floe relating his terror  
114     to explorer Robert Walton ...  
115     this excursion into horror  
116     by an 18-year-old's nightmare  
117     two years after she became pregnant  
118     with her first child, also unnamed ...  
119     The monster like all seeks love and recognition  
120     but suffers misunderstanding, rejection, hatred ...  
121     Fade to black ...

122  
123     Here's Proust: *The greater part of our memory lies*  
124     *outside us, in a dampish breeze, in the musty air of a*  
125     *bedroom or the smell of autumn's first fires, things*  
126     *through which we can retrieve any part of us that*  
127     *the reasoning mind ... disdained, the last vestige of*  
128     *the past, the best of it, the part which, after all our*  
129     *tears have dried, can make us weep again. Outside us?*  
130     *Inside us, more like, but stored away. ... It is only*  
131     *because we have forgotten that we can now and then*  
132     *return to the person we once were, envisage things as*



133     *that person did, be hurt again, because we are not*  
134     *ourselves anymore, but someone else, who once loved*  
135     *something that we no longer care about.*

136     Fade to black ...

137

138     Memorializing the parties of the unlined and bushy  
139     slipping tongues nonchalantly

140     as if the clock had indeed been stopped ...

141     No need to calculate the obliqueness

142     when you can stretch and raid the fridge

143     adjust the cushions out of earshot

144     of the influencers in the walls ...

145     An unstrung marionette finds words

146     in a redacted script ...

147     Indeed ... the blurbiness of blurbs:

148     I write you ... you write me ...

149     bundling software for coders

150     as the night twinkles with bug juice

151     in trash cans lined with garbage bags ...

152     The enthrallment of the table read

153     with you costumed for yet another audition ...

154     the runner-up benched on fouls ...

155     This will be a night to remember

156     a Titanic-ramming-iceberg night to remember

157     and you're buying into a stairway to heaven

158     to the magical realism

159     of a room filled with mirrors ...

160     gorging yourself on ample food

161     at the wolf's table ...

162     the-wolf-with-groping-paws-table

163     before engaging the matrix

164     of permutations ... of combinations ...

165     the morning after ride back to the future ...

166 Fade to black ...

167

168 Albertine comes to Paris and moves in with Marcel ...

169 By being available to Marcel

170 yet not committed entirely to him

171 Albertine enslaves him ...

172 *The frocks that I bought for her, the yacht of which*

173 *I had spoken to her, the wrappers from Fortuny's, all*

174 *these things having in this obedience on Albertine's*

175 *part not their recompense but their complement,*

176 *appeared to me now as so many privileges that I was*

177 *enjoying; for the duties and expenditure of a master*

178 *are part of his dominion, and define it, prove it,*

179 *fully as much as his rights. And these rights which*

180 *she recognized in me were precisely what gave my*

181 *expenditure its true character. I had a woman of my*

182 *own, who, at the first word that I sent to her*

183 *unexpectedly, made my messenger telephone humbly*

184 *that she was coming, that she was allowing herself to*

185 *be brought home immediately. I was more of a master*

186 *than I had supposed. More of a master, in other words*

187 *more of a slave ...*

188 Fade to black ...

189

190 The day, deftly unraveling, seems to disappear ...

191 So many thoughts vying for your attention

192 this idea of the texture of it all

193 everything everyone all at once

194 seemingly connected with tabs for those nestled

195 in the cleft of your memory ...

196 You recount how touch initiates the sense of I ...

197 how it costumes the body on misty mornings

198 and waits at the bus stop

199 for passengers to resume their lives ...  
200 And so it begins ... parsing the engagement  
201 with you in the soup aisle at the supermarket  
202 swiping your phone for texts, checking the message  
203 you took great care to get just right,  
204 elbowing through inundations amid  
205 the wearisome floundering of the spinning orb ...  
206 Fade to black ...  
207  
208 *My darling, dear Marcel, I return less quickly than*  
209 *this cyclist, whose machine I would like to borrow in*  
210 *order to be with you sooner. How could you imagine*  
211 *that I might be angry or that I could enjoy anything*  
212 *better than to be with you? It will be nice to go out,*  
213 *just the two of us together; it would be nicer still*  
214 *if we never went out except together. The ideas you*  
215 *get into your head! What a Marcel! What a Marcel!*  
216 *Always and ever your Albertine.*  
217 Fade to black ...  
218  
219 The House of Crazy opens for business ...  
220 speeding along with feigned nonchalance  
221 forcing us to dip our quills  
222 into rose-colored liquid  
223 to palatabalize appropriating  
224 a one-way ticket to elsewhere ...  
225 Photo albums bloat ...  
226 the way it was ...  
227 the way they were ...  
228 the way we were ...  
229 overdrawn bank accounts and selfies ...  
230 pockets stuffed with aftermaths ...  
231 They were game for anteing-up

232 the pot speaking a dead language ...  
233 Pity there wasn't an unfinished symphony  
234 for the sawtooth ensemble to finish ...  
235 and now your phone is dead  
236 and you're sweating indictment  
237 for buying a burger  
238 to get your kid into an ivy league school  
239 and you're ready to accept submissions  
240 for your 24-hour meltdown ...  
241 Subsequent tête-à-têtes to air on Netflix ...  
242 Hired hands hand in school colors  
243 in the nick of the full shortage ...  
244 Incidentals brim the showroom ...  
245 vet orphanhood ...  
246 The newly-hatched are cumbersome, yes? ...  
247 but then you like the length of autofictions  
248 fabricating homeland depositions ...  
249 some remotely ... with strings attached ...  
250 What did you mean by that anyway? ...  
251 Fade to black ...  
252  
253 Marcel uses the French language of property:  
254 *Albertine was living with me, was wholly mine.*  
255 Fade to black ...  
256  
257 You enjoy a kind of invisibility  
258 as if you had never existed ...  
259 a stand-in for the person-of-disinterest  
260 an Emily Dickinson shadowing Lady Gaga  
261 legitimizing your essential strangeness  
262 by ignoring boundaries ...  
263 Outside your bedroom window  
264 agoraphobes pitch headstone rubbings

265 capturing what had once  
266 maybe slipped through the cracks ...  
267 a yearning for old favorites  
268 to mean something else ...  
269 Odysseyites eyeball masked auditionees  
270 wielding shopping carts with the naivete  
271 of neighborhood know-it-alls ...  
272 Recognizable voiceovers  
273 nix invitations to the dance ...  
274 the sun wakes to discarded dance cards  
275 written up as nuance ...  
276 an opening to squeeze through  
277 with your doctored script  
278 rewiring your nerderly  
279 for next season's miniseries  
280 ideas appropriated from unreliable narrators ...  
281 *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*  
282 opens with a re-do of the last scene  
283 in *The Last Picture Show*  
284 the story-within-a-story  
285 about your own Paris, Texas  
286 in upstate New York  
287 an unknown spinning *Canterbury Tales*  
288 from the looms of Mohawk  
289 with a walk among the clouds  
290 after a Saturday afternoon 25-cent  
291 creature double feature  
292 in all three theaters  
293 a head-on crash course for clubbing  
294 with inside-outs mimicking trailers  
295 from Alt Cin 516's  
296 *brooding menace* assignment due Monday ...  
297 *The Creature From the Black Lagoon*

298     teases Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*  
299     bemoaning the convenience therein  
300     for backseat drivers into and out of the City  
301     excepting those staying after for extra credit ...  
302     the morning after coffee from Dunkin'  
303     using *The Law of Small Numbers* ...  
304     The fun-filled auditions were indeed fun-filled  
305     yet when the real runway called  
306     you ran away with your *Regents Review 2.0*  
307     gave head to Ivy Leaguers ...  
308     the groves of academe morphing into the graves  
309     with the segue to a second tour in Viet Nam  
310     taking a shrapnel while on reconnaissance  
311     dying 35 years later at 57  
312     without a memory of a parade  
313     because there were none ...  
314     Fade to black ...  
315  
316     *Yet to me to love in a carnal sense was at any rate a*  
317     *triumph over countless rivals. I can never repeat it*  
318     *often enough; it was first and foremost a sedative.*  
319     Fade to black ...  
320  
321     This from Emma, *Book Around the Corner* blogger ...  
322     *Marcel is a control freak, a stalker. Jealous doesn't*  
323     *even cover his attitude. He suffocates Albertine and*  
324     *then is surprised that she lies to him to cover*  
325     *herself! He checks on her, calls her girlfriend*  
326     *Andrée to verify whether she really went where she*  
327     *said she'd go. He inquires about whom she spoke to. He*  
328     *sabotages her plans any time he thinks she might*  
329     *meet someone he doesn't want her to talk to. Marcel is*  
330     *obsessed with Albertine's supposed lesbianism.*

331 Fade to black ...  
332  
333 Albertine engages in clandestine lesbian affairs ...  
334 Marcel is tormented, yet strangely turned-on, by  
335 his suspicions ... *Only the desire which she excited*  
336 *in others, when I learned of it and began to suffer*  
337 *again, in my desire to keep her from them, could put*  
338 *her back on her pedestal. Suffering alone gave life*  
339 *to my tedious attachment to her.*  
340 Fade to black ...  
341  
342 You windowshop for a one-way ticket to immortality  
343 as the bell opens Round 7  
344 to a color field measuring eight-feet-by-six-feet ...  
345 footnoting the 600 square feet Rothko reneged on  
346 while Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* follows  
347 the two-point-five mil as it disappears  
348 into someone's backstory  
349 demonstrating for arts majors the phenomenon  
350 of the Rothkavian blur ...  
351 Fade to black ...  
352  
353 Albertine goes dancing with a girlfriend ...  
354 When Marcel asks her about this, she lies ...  
355 Albertine is not a good liar ...  
356 She lies so much and so badly  
357 that Marcel begins lying too ...  
358 Fade to black ...  
359  
360 Lady Macbeth's *Come, you spirits*  
361 *That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here ...*  
362 Enter, stage left, Somnambulist 1:  
363 *I jaywalk out of a lobotomy ...*

364 *I mean, c'mon... with a line like this?...*  
365 *Soliloquize me!...*  
366 *A woman wrote Shakespeare?...*  
367 *But didn't we already know that?...*  
368 *Perhaps the archives bubble with happenstance*  
369 *as Little Miss Whatsherface*  
370 *shadows the Bard's ghost...*  
371 *This too will be stuffed into a time capsule*  
372 *as soon as... Enter, Somnambulist 2:*  
373 *I texted Taming of the Shrew Katherine who blurted*  
374 *My tongue will tell the anger of my heart...*  
375 *The least we could hope for*  
376 *in dawn's early flubbed lines...*  
377 *Whoa!... here's Somnambulist 3*  
378 *with Othello's Emilia: Let husbands know*  
379 *Their wives have sense like them.*  
380 *Fade to black...*  
381  
382 *Unable to bear his jealousy, Albertine runs away...*  
383 *Marcel writes Albertine begging her to return...*  
384 *He tells her he has decided to buy her*  
385 *a yacht and a Rolls Royce...*  
386 *He plays the jealousy card*  
387 *suggesting that Andrée will replace her...*  
388 *He receives word that she has been killed*  
389 *in a riding accident...*  
390 *Her death does not free Marcel...*  
391 *He pens 100 pages on the metaphysics of grief:*  
392 *My imagination sought her in the skies, on evenings*  
393 *like those when we were still able to gaze at it*  
394 *together; I tried to wing my affections toward her,*  
395 *beyond the moonlight that she loved, to console her*  
396 *for no longer being alive, and this love for a person*

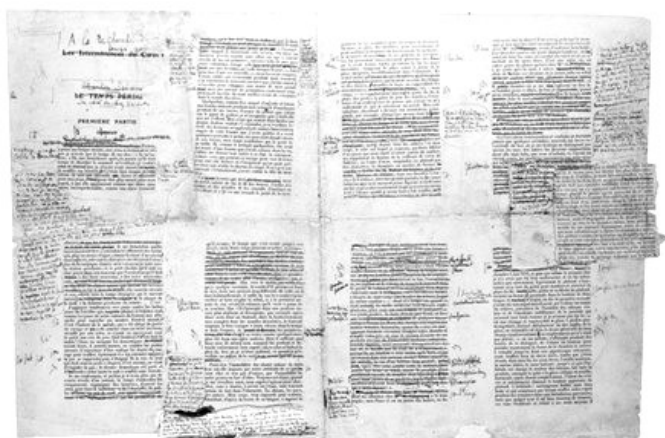


397     *who had become so remote was like a religion, my*  
398     *thoughts toward her like prayers.*  
399     Fade to black ...  
400  
401     Today's lecture on the *Gerty* episode in *Ulysses*  
402     held most but you found it formulaic ...  
403     old guys getting off at the sight of young skin ...  
404     There was a moment a bit ago when you had almost  
405     thought it through ...  
406     or thought you could think it through  
407     but that passed with Kindle's eInk ...  
408     backlit and all ...  
409     You look at yourself ... and at the trees  
410     cavorting ... preparing to give it another go ...  
411     the clockwork gearing loud and exciting ...  
412     Isn't it something how we grab ourselves  
413     following directions into the next scene  
414     and GPS our location ...  
415     which may or may not play out as hoped? ...  
416     But so what? ...  
417     *In some strange way it's all good, yes? ...*  
418     Another boldfaced expedition  
419     with you celebrating  
420     the flash nonfiction of Li Po  
421     *In the mountains on a summer day ...*  
422     Fade to black ...  
423  
424     *One only loves that which*  
425     *one does not entirely possess ...*  
426     Fade to black ...  
427  
428     How to explain the pencil portrait in the corner  
429     sketched in someone else's hand? ... You continue

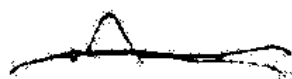
430 with Maggie Nelson's *The Latest Winter* ...  
431 the whole thing coming back to your draft  
432 and how even before the bell ended Round 12  
433 you had managed to skip the three chapters  
434 assigned for extra credit ...  
435 You hawk the installation with misunderstanding ...  
436 a French press with a migraine  
437 while your cross country junkets  
438 cameo on Facebook ... intriguing tongues ...  
439 trying to fit into the holes  
440 dug into the script by a misdirected director  
441 whose profile you later learn  
442 was lifted from a table of contents ...  
443 Pasts spill out ... time borrowed ...  
444 You begin dropping clues  
445 with the insistence of a night out ...  
446 This happens, yes? ... and continues ...  
447 abutments tuned to a minor key ...  
448 Roundabouts try to round you up but you load  
449 your brush with paint ... and insignificance ...  
450 You are told it was all written down ...  
451 every nuance ... misappropriation ... identity theft  
452 circling like a flock of kites ...  
453 The sketches you made in a ledger went undiscovered  
454 for over 120 years ...  
455 Undisclosed players hung out  
456 at a neglected ball diamond  
457 falling into the wrong chapter ... losing face ...  
458 The matinee chides your hypothesis  
459 bulking the theorem into oblivion ...  
460 Early arrivals arrive ...  
461 captured on security cameras ...  
462 he said ... she said ... they said ...

463 sample bags brim with notions from ATMs ...  
464 fingers finger finger food ...  
465 count doubloons ...  
466 worry the quivering idiocy of disintegration ...  
467 Instead of pampering the chef, perhaps? ...  
468 By the time the opposition dismounts  
469 the case will have been opened and shut ...  
470 The alleged victim ... vis-à-vis  
471 camera-shy sommeliers ...  
472 It's all in the sealed indictment ...  
473 at least according to Wikileaks ...  
474 Perhaps we shouldn't go there? ...  
475 Yes, let's not go there ...  
476 Perhaps we should relapse into past roles ...  
477 play it safe ... play the parts as written ...  
478 You worry that neither science nor religion  
479 adequately explains the world ...  
480 the simultaneity with its information overload  
481 kicking players to the curb ...  
482 The concert of minimalist parentheticals  
483 made for an interesting respite  
484 with its backstory on the inner life of trees ...  
485 And here comes the anxiety over broken links  
486 catapulting you into a message room of sorts  
487 where you try on different *what ifs*  
488 following each to its logical delusion ...  
489 Fade to black ...  
490  
491 For UAlbany Professor/Translator/Novelist  
492 Lydia Davis, a Proustian sentence is full of asides,  
493 parenthetical remarks, parentheses, dashes,  
494 illuminations, reconsiderations, revisions, addenda,  
495 corrections, augmentations, digressions,

496 qualifications, erasures, deletions, and marginal  
497 notes. The sentence, in other words, attempts to  
498 reflect Proust's entire thought (The Architecture of  
499 Thought, *Pen America*, January 8, 2007).  
500 Fade to black ...



A first galley proof of  
*À la recherche du temps perdu: Du côté de chez Swann*  
with Proust's handwritten corrections



swimming in happenstance press

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